

WHAT'S ON

Zainul Quamrul Exhibition

Venue: Nalini Kanta Bhattacharya Gallery, National Museum

Date: Dec 22-Jan 18

Time: 10am-8pm



Theatre


Play: Baramkhana

Troupe: Theatre

Venue: National Theatre Hall, Shilpakala Academy

Date: Jan 4

Time: 6pm




Group Art Exhibition

Title: Shilpacharya and his Outer World of Art

Venue: Bengal Shilpalaya, H-42, R-16, Dhanmondi

Date: Dec 28-Jan 8

Time: 12pm-8pm



Theatre

Play: Ayna Bibir Pala

Troupe: Natyadhara

Venue: Studio Theatre Hall, Shilpakala Academy

Date: Jan 4

Time: 6pm



Theatre

Play: Chaka

Troupe: Bunon

Venue: National Theatre Hall, Shilpakala Academy

Date: Jan 5

Time: 6pm



Memorial meeting

Anowar Ahmed remembered in Bogra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Bogra Lekhok Chakra arranged a memorial meeting of noted poet of Bogra, Rupam Anowar Ahmed (1941-2003). The event was held at its office at Kazi Nazrul Islam road, Bogra on Wednesday on the 10th death anniversary of Ahmed. He passed away on December 24, 2003.

The event was presided over by poet Islam Rafiq. Noted poet, professor and advisor to the organisation, Mohammad Shahidullah graced the programme as chief guest while Bogra Press Club secretary and news editor of Daily Karatoa, Prodip Bhattacharja Shankar; Adv. Polash Khandakar and poet Shibli Moktadir were present as special guests.

The speakers recollected Ahmed's literary contributions to the Little Magazine published by Lekhok Chakra. Later, Bogra Lekhok Chakra honoured poet Azizur Rahman Taj by giving Anowar Ahmed Medal 2013.

IT'S TRUE!



In 1991, Sridevi -- one of Bollywood's most impact-making leading ladies -- was approached by Steven Spielberg for a role in his sci-fi blockbuster "Jurassic Park" but the actress let go of the offer, reportedly "because it wasn't a starring role and it would have meant taking a hiatus from Bollywood, at a time, when she was at the peak of her career." In September 2013, the media announced that Sridevi had been approached by director Amy Redford for a stellar role in a film titled "Cowboys and Indians" along with Meryl Streep. It was said that Sridevi's "superlative performance in English Vinglish is one of the reasons for her being considered for the prestigious project."

TRIBUTE The Bulbul's deafening silence

SADYA AFREEN MALICK

On a cold winter morning on December 27, 2012, Nazrul's world lost one of its most revered and beloved guardians. The "Bulbul" of Nazrul songs, Sohrab Hossain breathed his last, leaving behind a nation in mourning.

An all-pervasive personality who seemed to cast his protective shadow over the world of Nazrul Sangeet, he was a father figure, a devoted artiste and a mentor to all around him. Sohrab Hossain nourished and preserved the original Nazrul tunes with tireless dedication and passion.

He was among the golden crop of artistes who immortalised the golden era of the 1940's to the 1970's. Abbasuddin Ahmed, Sohrab Hossain, Sheikh Luthfar Rahman, Bedaruddin Ahmed, Abdul Halim Chowdhury, Laila Arzumand Banu, Afsari Khanum, along with Feroza Begum, Sudhin Das, Julhasuddin Ahmed popularised Nazrul songs to grand heights and captured audiences far and across.

Sohrab Hossain -- Sohrab bhai to me - was my guru at Chhayanaut, (the name aptly signifying the shade of a tree) and also trained students at Bulbul Academy, Nazrul Academy and Nazrul Institute.

The sight of him arriving at Chhayanaut on his noisy Vespa motorcycle is an image that somehow refuses to leave my memory. He used to jokingly call his motorcycle the "helicopter". With a permanent smile on his face he would engage in a friendly banter with Sheikh Luthfur Rahman and Zahidur Rahim to create a lighter mood before our classes started. Behind the easy smile, however was a strict disciplinarian when it came to training, a stickler for maintaining the original notations of Nazrul and a purist



Sohrab Hossain

when it came to performing.

My earliest memory of him is facing him at the Chhayanaut admission exam held in English Preparatory school (now Udayan) in the Dhaka University campus in 1969. Sohrab bhai along with Sanjida Khatun was taking the admission tests. At Sohrab bhai's suggestion I was admitted not to the "shishu" class, but to a class higher, the "prarombhik" class. During my first performance on stage at the annual function of Chhayanaut, held at Engineers Institute, Sohrab bhai had taught me the song "Biswa Dulali Nabi Nandini", an Islamic song. Little did I know that for the next 45 years he would be my guide in the journey through the fascinating world of Nazrul songs.

Sohrab bhai's own journey through Nazrul Sangeet has been nothing short of illustrious. His voice had certain inimitable qualities that would mesmerise audiences. Nazrul songs starting from ghazal, kabbyo-geeti to kirtan, folk and Islamic all blended flawlessly with his rendi-

tions. The song never seemed the same when sung by following artistes. His gayaki captured listeners with a unique mix of resonating timbre and nimble vocal manipulation. His songs such as Shaon ashilo phirey, Pashane bhangle ghuum, Ke bideshi bon udashi, Beshuur binaye, Gaan guli mor brought to life the inner meaning of the songs.

His mastery of the range of Nazrul songs was well known. He would effortlessly perform kirtan, ghazal and lighter songs such as Amar Hori namey ruchi karon porinamey luchi; Chhuona chhuona bodhu; Mor pria hobey esho rani; Nirijoney shokhi and Ami kuul chhere cholilam bheshey. In fact, there is hardly any variety of Nazrul Sangeet that he has not performed.

Sohrab bhai would often recall his fascination with the music played on the gramophone records. "I was so desperate to attend theatre that I even had to sell my mother's valuables to buy the tickets! The Minerva Theatre,

in West Bengal, was a popular source of entertainment at that time. During the interval of the plays "Sirajuddowla" and "Laili Majnu", reputed singers like Angur Bala, Indu Bala used to perform songs. Gradually, I could say the drama lines of the characters by heart, not to speak of the songs. This is how my love for Nazrul songs started," he would add.

Continuing in the same vein, he said, "I hardly knew who the composer or writer was behind the songs. I remember one morning when everyone was rushing towards the Ranaghat bazaar. There was an air of breathless excitement. The one thing I remember from that first encounter with the poet, Nazrul, was his wild locks of hair and deep inquisitive eyes. Little did I know then that someday I would be so inspired by the immense creativity of the poet and that his songs would be my ultimate identity."

After partition Sohrab Hossain settled in Dhaka. From then on he made an entry in the music scene through recitals in the radio.

He was awarded the Swadhinata Puroshkar by the Bangladesh government in 1980; Nazrul Padak, 1982 (Nazrul Academy); Nazrul Academy, 1981 (Churulia, India) to name a few for his single-minded dedication to preserving and performing Nazrul songs.

Nazrul Islam undoubtedly enriched the world of Bangla songs with his creative genius. However, gifted artistes like Sohrab Hossain, brought Nazrul's work closer to the people. His dedication to training artistes, so Nazrul could be remembered in posterity, underlines the role of a guardian he took upon himself. Losing him feels like letting go of the hand that has guided a legion of artistes for decades.

Q&A 'If not a singer I would have been a historian'

... Ferdous Ara

A CORRESPONDENT

Ferdous Ara has established herself as one of the outstanding Nazrul artistes in the country. A versatile singer, Ferdous has also popularised some patriotic and adhunik songs. She often hosts programmes on Nazrul sangeet as well. Here's a look on the crooner's casual side:

What is your nickname?
Marine.
And your sun sign?
Libra.
What are your recurrent dreams?
Many a time in my dreams, I have gone back to my childhood. Sometimes I have seen myself with a handful of chocolates -- even though I am not particularly fond of sweets.
I have also visualised my name being announced for an award and hurrying to reach the venue -- but I don't know how to get there.



Any ambitions?
Life is too short. There is too little time for achievement. I sometimes feel that I haven't used my time well as an artiste in the media for the last four decades. Basically, I go for quality rather than quantity. Having said that, my first goal is to look after my family and then devote my time to music and only music.

What would you have been if not a singer?
Music is my life but I also love history. I remember particularly my university days when we used to go on excursions to the archaeological sites. It was quite frustrating when we would come across the dilapidated historical monuments in remote areas. These are gold mines, which could be turned into tourist attractions like any other country. Maybe if not a singer I would have been a historian.

What people don't know about you...
I was a champion all along in the inter-college competitions. I was an avid fan of the young Russian gymnastic star Nadia Comaneci and tried to emulate her. And believe it or not, I also used to love boxing.

An interesting story: Once I had gone to Rangamati for a shooting of a music video, directed by Khalid Mohammad Mithu. There I was supposed to climb to a hill top. I had no qualms because of my love for games and the outdoors.

Meanwhile my husband, who was in a boat nearby, expressed his disapproval of my endeavour. Much to his and everyone's surprise, I clambered up easily and even changed my attire and touched up my appearance while precariously balanced on a rock!

What are your prized possessions?
My father, late engineer AHM Abdul Hai, was a renowned classical singer of the early '50s. His old harmonium and four new ones and particularly a sur mandal gifted to my father by the great classical singer Ustad Ayet Ali Khan are amongst my prized possessions.

Are you a shopaholic?
Yes! I love buying exclusive knick-knacks for the house.

Sherlock return watched by 9.2m

The return of "Sherlock" to BBC One was watched by an average of 9.2 million people, according to overnight figures.

Viewing peaked at 9.7 million during the first 5 minutes of the drama, which saw the detective reunited with Dr John Watson after he appeared to die at the finale of series two.

The first episode of the third series offered fans several different versions of how Holmes survived the fall.

Consolidated figures, including iPlayer viewing, will be released next week.

The numbers are an improvement on the series two premiere, which was watched by 8.75 million on 1 January, 2012 - rising to 10.66 million after seven days of consolidated viewing.

Some 9.78 million watched the series finale, which saw Holmes, played by Benedict Cumberbatch, plunge to his apparent death.

Steven Moffat, Sherlock's co-creator, executive producer and writer with Mark Gatiss, called the ratings "thrilling news."

"A tribute to the team who work so hard, and with such pride, on the show, and of course to the genius of [Holmes author] Sir



Arthur Conan Doyle," said Moffat.

"It's proof that audiences will show up if you give them what they want - though we can't throw Benedict off a roof every week."

Reviews for Wednesday's episode were generally positive, with The Guardian's Sam Wollaston saying he thought Sir Arthur "would approve and enjoy it too".

The Daily Telegraph's Chris Harvey hailed it as "the triumphant return of the most

charismatic, most fun character on British television".

However the Daily Mail's Christopher Stevens called it a "cop-out", saying Holmes's complex explanation for his survival was "barely more convincing" than the red herring versions.

According to social media analyst SecondSync, the opening episode generated more than 300,000 tweets on Twitter.

The drama also featured Cumberbatch's parents, appearing as his on-screen mother and father.

The actor said he was "so proud" of Wanda Ventham and Timothy Carlton, but admitted it was "kind of nerve-racking" to appear alongside them.

Sherlock co-creator Gatiss said he was "delighted our loyal audience tuned in on an appropriately bleak and stormy New Year's night".

He added: "After two years it's fantastic to have this response to Sherlock, John and all the team being back on TV. All this and Dr Watson gets married in three days time!"

Sources: BBC

"Trial of Mallam Ilya" BotTala underlines a socio-political malaise

SAURAV DEY

Theatre troupe BotTala staged their latest production "Trial of Mallam Ilya" at the Natmandal of Dhaka University on Thursday evening. The play, written by African playwright Mohammad Ben Abdallah, is translated into Bengali by Soumya Sarker, while Mohammad Ali Haider is the director.

The play's central character is Mallam Ilya, the fallen leader of a revolution who is also a narrator. The play sets off on a dark stage where Mallam is taken prisoner by young soldiers following a counter-coup. The soldiers, led by Malwal take Mallam to a secret place where they set up a court and put him on trial. Mallam then starts narrating the story, unfolding the multi-layered storyline.

The play is written in the context of political instability in a post-colonial African country where one coup follows another, symptomatic of a deep socio-political malaise. With its gripping narrative, the play articulates the semiotics of revolution. In a metaphoric sense, the use of masks represents wickedness. The story of coups, conspiracies and political turmoil is subtly presented to the audience. Kudos to the



A scene from the play.

team for the great background score and innovative presentation. However, the light design could have been better on the small stage of Natmandal. Pankaj Majumdar as Mallam and Mizanur Rahman as Chandrapuri excelled in their roles.

The play also features Toufiq Hasan Bhuiyan, Kazi Rokhana Ruma, Samina Luthfa, Sheyuti Shahgufta, Imran Khan Munna and Humaira Akhter. The play is the fifth production of BotTala, a troupe that represents the voice of the masses.

PHOTO: RIDWAN ADID RUPON

John Abraham marries girlfriend Priya Runchal

John Abraham has entered matrimony with his long-time girlfriend Priya Runchal.

The actor took to Twitter to wish his fans a very Happy New Year and signed off by formally introducing his better half as Priya Abraham.

The tweet read, "Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed 2014! May this year bring you love, good fortune and joy. Love, John and Priya Abraham (sic)."

The wedding seems to have been a hush-hush affair.

John's marriage plans have often been a hot topic of discussion. But now, with John coming out in the open with his wedding to Priya, all speculations have been put to rest.

John, 41, had begun his career as a model. He then tried his hands at acting and then eventually turned a producer. Priya is a non-Bollywood person and is reportedly an investment banker.

Here's wishing Mr. and Mrs. John Abraham a very happy married life.

Sources: Zee News

